GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1696
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Blocking Pornographic Sites
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Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has prepared a list of pornographic websites including child pornographic sites;
(b) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken to block them; and
(c) the measures taken by the Government to increase capacity and technical expertise of government agencies to monitor and block such sites?

Answer

(a) and (b): The filtering of web sites with pornographic content poses significant technical challenge. These websites keep on changing the names, domain addresses and hosting platforms from time to time making it difficult to filter or block such websites using technical tools available in the market. Further "https" websites with encrypted content are used to transmit the pornographic content which makes identification of such sites difficult as the data is encrypted. Further most of the pornographic sites are hosted outside the country, where viewing pornography is legal. However, child pornography is banned in most of the countries.

The Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000 together with the Indian Penal Code 1860, provides legal framework for countering pornographic sites including child pornography. As per section 67B of the Information and Technology Act 2000, and Sections 13 and 14 of Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act 2012, online child sexual abuse is illegal in India in terms of publication, transmission, creation, collection, browsing, downloading, advertising, grooming, recording etc. and is considered cognizable and non-bailable offence.

International Organization, INTERPOL maintains a list of "Worst-of-list" websites containing most severe child sexual abuse material, which is updated by INTERPOL on a regular basis. Action has been initiated by the Government to get the list of child pornography sites from INTERPOL through Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) which is the nodal agency for interacting with INTERPOL. The list of such sites obtained regularly would be taken up for blocking.

(c): To address the issues effectively, Government is in regular touch with Internet Service Providers to upgrade their infrastructure and technology to effectively address the shortcomings with regard to identifying and blocking encrypted websites / URLs. Government is in regular touch with Social Networking sites, having their offices in India, to disable objectionable contents at the source from their websites. Government has also initiated Research and Development programmes to deal with technical issues relating to encrypted communications from the point of monitoring and blocking.
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